

CONFLICT RESOLUTION TRAINING

Give up being right and making
others wrong

Key Messages about Conflict

- Conflict is neither good or bad
- Conflict is inevitable
- Conflict does not have to result in winners and losers
- In conflict, both parties tend to believe that their opinion is fact
- Too often, both parties see themselves as innocent victims who represent the side of truth and fairness.
- Too often, both parties perceive all destructive acts carried out by others completely blind to identical acts carried out by self or those on “my” side.

CONFLICTS

- Formal: Conflicts that have officially involved mediators, arbitrators, attorneys, employee relations staff, or other dispute resolution professionals. incur attorney fees and diverted time of staff to arbitrate and public attention)
- Informal: Conflicts that have involved no such outside parties in the conflict resolution process. (everyday problems that most managers take for granted)

Sources of Conflict

- Short term pressures versus long term goals
- Differing perceptions, values, cultural norms
- Ambiguous jurisdictions
- Lack of clarity
- Competition for limited resources
- Needs, such as power, status, ego, recognition, self-worth
- Parochial and regional attitudes
- Change – some not wanting to let go of the old
- Change- Some want to move TOO Quick
- What are other sources of Conflict?

CONFLICT OR SOMETHING ELSE?

- Do not confuse conflict with indecision, disagreement, stress, or other common experiences that may cause, or be caused by, conflict.
- These are not conflicts and they are not best handled by conflict-resolution tools.
- It would be “conflict” if
A. They are independent
B. They blame each other
C. They are angry
D. Their behavior is causing a problem.

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LETS USE THE WORD “STRUCTURE” TO ANALYSE CONFLICT

- Conflict Structure consists of:
- Interdependency (parties need each other)
- Number of interested parties
- Constituent representation (who are parties representing)
- Negotiator authority (is it high or low)
- Critical urgency (how much time do you have)
- Communication channels (face to face, face to phone or keyboard)

IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S BROKE

- Do not assume that as a manager you are responsible for keeping all of your employees happy. Some problems are up to the individual to resolve. Some differences are benign, even beneficial to the work environment. If you have not thought through the situation, its smart not to jump into the middle and try to fix it. You may only make it worse.

REFLEXES (BETRAYED BY OUR BODIES)

- The obstacle to resolving conflicts by reconciling interests is *not* a lack of intelligence. One thing we know very well is how to recognize it when it is happening. Lets prove it.
- Jot down a list of 10 to 15 words or phrases that describe how you know when conflict is going on between other people.

Five Conflict Resolution Tactics

- Give Up Being Right and making others wrong
- Give Others What They Need
- Take It or Leave IT
- If X – Then Y
- See yourself as Others See You

Give Up Being Right and making others wrong

- In a conflict, people typically argue for their positions because everyone thinks he/she is right.
- Therefore, if one person is right – the other person **MUST** be wrong.
- Therefore the **CONFLICT** – If I am right – then **YOU** must be wrong.

Give Up Being Right and making others wrong

- Movement toward resolution will not take place until someone is willing to “give up being right and making others wrong.”
- We did not say to give up your need – we said “give up being right and making others wrong.”
- You will find that once you start to do this – the other person is willing to so, as well.

Give Up Being Right and making others wrong

- You can signal your willingness to do so by listening to the other person's position **BEFORE** giving your opinion.
- Often – people remain in conflict because they do not feel that they have been heard and understood.
- Try this the next time you are in conflict:
 - Paraphrase.

Give Up Being Right and making others wrong

- Paraphrase to the satisfaction of the other person's) what he/she has said before giving your opinion.
- Keep asking, “ Is there anything else you want to say?”
- Keep paraphrasing until **THEY ARE** sure you really have understood **THEM**.
- Work to understand others **BEFORE** trying to have them understand **YOU**.
- As you continue to paraphrase, you will notice that the other person seems less and less argumentative.
- Paraphrasing ensures that you will resolve conflicts faster than before and to the greater satisfaction of those involved.

Give Others What They Need

- If you are in a conflict, and you are arguing and not arriving at an agreement, it is a good bet that you are in a “World of Wants.”
- People argue over wants because this world is one of limited resources, typically such things as people, money and/or time.
- In this world, the people who has the “power” (usually due to authority) will get what he/she wants and the others will be left with whatever is left over.
- This is a prescription for disaster and dissatisfaction, sabotage of agreements and a failure to **resolve the conflict.**

Give Others What They Need

- The World of Needs is a world of unlimited possibilities.
- People will argue in the World of Wants, they will **negotiate** in the world of needs because they perceive that there are multiple ways to get their needs met, so they won't have to be attached to only one way to feel satisfied.
- If you are arguing and not getting anywhere, ask the question, "Why is important to you?" to get at the underlying need.

Give Others What They Need

- For Example, if you are arguing over which department gets to add an extra person, ask, “Why is the extra person more important to you?” The answer may be “to service customers more effectively.”
- “Servicing customers more effectively” may or may not require adding more people. The negotiation now becomes how to “service customers more effectively.”
- This issue can be resolved in many ways – it may not just be over who gets the extra person.
- We need to figure out the “need” and then concentrate on meeting that “need.”

Give Others What They Need

- Let us say that there is an argument over a budget and how the dollars should be allocated.
- This is an argument that may always lead to a “winner” and a “loser”.
- Let us suppose that in the midst of the argument – you ask “Why are those budget dollars so important to you?”
- Once you have the answer – you can now work together to figure out how to meet the need that has been identified.
- This may be “purchase equipment, or kid’s activities, etc.”
- By finding out the exact NEED – you can now work together to figure out to meet the need.
- After all, you are working together on the same board- for the same purpose.

Take It or Leave It May Be an Important Strategy

- You may be thinking that there are some **conflicts** where it is not appropriate to give up the need to be right because, in fact you need to be right. AND – you would be right.
- For instance:
 - You may have an employee who is consistently late.
 - You may have a board member who will not assist the other board members and that behavior cannot be tolerated.
 - You may have children who are continually threatening to quit school even though the law requires them to stay in school.
 - You may have a manager that gives other employees assignments at the last minute and the delivery dates are impossible to meet.

Take It or Leave It May Be an Important Strategy

- You may feel very frustrated about these situations.
- You may also feel that you have done everything you can, but beg the person to change and nothing that you have done has made any difference.
- What makes these situations difficult to deal with is that you treat these situations as though they are open to conflict resolution, when, in fact, they are not.
- You keep seeking commitment, when, in fact, all you really want is compliance.
- These situations are called “TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT.”
- These are ultimatums and are not open to the “Everybody Wins” model.
- In these situations, not everyone will win, because not everyone’s needs will be met.

Take It or Leave It May Be an Important Strategy

- These are the situations where it does not matter what the other person's needs are because no choice is possible.
- Either the other person complies with your request, or suffers the consequences.
- Likewise, there are situations where it does not matter what YOUR Needs are because NO Choice is possible.
- Either YOU comply with other's request or YOU suffer the consequences.
- No CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS is needed or called for.
- There is a rule or policy that MUST be adhered to regardless of whether one likes or agrees with the rule or policy.

If X ... Then Y – How All Conflicts are Resolved

- All conflict, no matter what, is ultimately resolved bas on “If X ... Then Y.”
- I will do this in exchange for you doing that – (quid pro quo).
- Example:
 - The husband constantly forgets to wipe the sink – so the wife puts wipes and signs on the sink to remind him.

See Yourself As Others See You

- There is something common to every conflict we are involved with.
- This commonality is with us at all times, but it is a blind spot that, by definition, we do not see.
- Sometimes, the people we are in conflict with will point out our blind spot to us, but when they do, we do not always pay attention even though discovering this blind spot will assist us in resolving conflicts and improving our relationships.

See Yourself As Others See You

- To find the answer to this riddle, find a mirror and look into it.
- The blind spot will be as big as the nose on your face as well as your entire face and body (if it a full length mirror).
- For all of us, the one commonality to every conflict – is US.
- Have you noticed that regardless of who we are in conflict with or the issue about which we are in conflict – we are always there.
- To resolve a conflict, I therefore suggest you first examine where there is anything that you are doing (or not doing) that may be causing the conflict to persist.

See Yourself As Others See You

- People do not examine their own behavior first.
- More commonly, people ask questions like “How can I get the other person to change?” or “What do I need to do or say that will get the other person to do what I want him to do?” or “Don’t they see that I AM RIGHT.”

See Yourself As Others See You

- Consider the there is often something that you are doing or not doing that may be causing the conflict to persist, but, as noted before, it is generally a blind spot.
- **AND GUESS WHAT?**
- We are blind to our blind spots.

How do we see a blind spot that we are blind to?

- Listen to the statements that are being said to you:
 - You are being defensive
 - You do not listen
 - Why do you always have to be right?
 - You do not take me seriously
 - You are being obstinate

How do we see a blind spot that we are blind to?

- As the poet Robert Buns wrote: “O would some power the gift to give us to see ourselves as others see us.”
- Look in the mirror again.
- Have a conversation with yourself.
 - Do you know your blind spot?
 - Have you listened to what the person is saying without arguing?
 - Is saying “no” a reasoned approach or simply a habitual one that is often your default position.
 - If you will only give up the need to be right, you will find that a world full of conflict is also a world full of possibility.

Three Steps To Assertive Communication

- **Describe the situation or idea as clearly and specific as you can.**
- **Express how you feel about the situation**
- **Specify what you want. Include specific Deadline.**

Active Listening Techniques

- Attending
- Paraphrasing
- Speaking from Self
- Clarifying
- Asking
- Encouraging
- Reflecting
- Summarizing

Understanding Yourself

- What are my strengths?
- What are my limitations?
- Am I a good listener?
- Where am I psychologically vulnerable?
- Where am I emotionally vulnerable?
- What are my prejudices and biases?
- What kind of climate do I create in negotiations?
- How do I define “fair?”
- What are my needs during negotiation?

“Walk a Mile in my Shoes”

- A key attitude for anyone negotiating a conflict is to “walk a mile in my shoes.”
- Attempt to view the conflict through the other person’s eyes.
- This will help a great deal in getting past perceptions that block resolution.

HOW TO RESOLVE A CONFLICT

- THREE WAYS:
- Power contests win-lose, but not both)
- Rights contests my rights are more legitimate than my opponent's rights)
- Interest reconciliation. A smart manager avoids the first two and focuses on finding ways to resolve conflicts through the third. A team finding the best—or least bad—solution)
- Everyone wins where both would optimize—not necessarily maximize—the resources and earn each others voluntary support, trust, and generosity—a good-will savings account for future spending needs! Also both would earn the respect of top management for working

Mediation

- Mediation is the intervention of an acceptable and impartial third party in a dispute.
- Steps in the mediation process
 - Preparation
 - Reconstruction of the conflict
 - Definition of the points of dispute and agreement
 - Creating Acceptable Options for Agreement
 - Forming an Agreement

ESSENTIAL PROCESS OF MEDIATION

- Dialogue that is
 - 1. directly between disputants
 - 2. limited by the cardinal rules
 - 3. about the issue to be resolved and
 - 4. sustained long enough to find a solution.
- **CARDINAL RULES DURING MEDIATION:**
 - 1. We must stay in the essential process—no walk aways.
 - 2. We must not impose one-sided solution—no power plays.
- (To reach a “consensual” solution to a conflict, we must have a mediated dialogue in

PREVENTIVE MEDIATION

- A dialogue tool for use by members and leaders of working groups that applies two guiding principles drawn from the practice of mediation and enables non-adversarial management of differences in all important relationships.
- SO NOW WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE STRUCTURE OF THE CONFLICT CAN VARY WIDELY. WE WILL USE THESE TOOLS AS APPROPRIATE.

MANAGERIAL MEDIATION

- A dialogue tool for use by managers, supervisors, team leaders, and others that involves a simple form of third-party mediation to resolve conflict between two employees for whose performance the manager is responsible.

SELF-MEDIATION

- A dialogue tool for use by individuals who are personally involved in conflict with another person with whom they have an ongoing, interdependent relationship. The self-mediator performs the essential functions of a third-party mediator while also representing his or her own interests that are at stake in the dispute.

A CASE OF CONFLICT

- Lets enter a “real conflict” that is happening here and walk through it together.

THE STEPS

- Step 1. Decide to mediate.
- A. Does the tool fit the problem? Do not use it to establish innocence or guilt; to discipline or punish; to decide right and wrong. Plan the future, not judge the past!
- B. “ Eileen” as the manager decides what problem is to be solved and the parties together will decide how to solve the problem.
- C. This process should not be used for violations of ethical or legal issues, substandard individual job performance or personal problems
- D. Is this process worth the time and trouble knowing mediation will require at least an hour

THE STEPS

- Step 2: Hold preliminary meetings
- A. To hear each person's side of the story.
- B. To define the business problem to be solved.
- C. To explain key information about the three way meeting
- D. To secure their agreement to attend.

THE STEPS

- Step 3: Plan the context
- A. Location that is neutral and private. Not in your office as well, then subtly reinforcing the message that she is the mediator only and she is delegating decision making authority to them.
- B. Seating and physical surroundings. Sit across from each other, close blinds, have water.
- C. Time of day, day of week. Look for high mental energy.
- D. Who is present. Making sure that it is known this is not a disciplinary meeting. Even not using the use “mediation” but a business meeting about a business problem might be better. So if possible, only the parties involved should be present.
- E. Length of time. Asking for at least 90 minutes so

THE STEPS

- Step 4: Hold a three way meeting
- A. Do not start until all are present.
- B. When everyone is seated and settled make opening comments that set the stage and create a positive frame for a three way meeting.
- C. Stay on topic
- D. Recognize conciliatory gestures on each persons parts as necessary. Such as apologizing, owning responsibility, conceding, self disclosing.
- E. Be quiet do not give advice or ideas for

THE STEPS

- Lets make a deal:
- When the window of opportunity opens, the manager as mediator should seize the opportunity to help the participants make a deal.
- The “Good Deal” should:
 - Be balanced
 - Behaviorally specific
 - Written
- It must pass the WIIFM test (what’s in it for me)
- Then comes follow up with everyone to agree to meet in a week or two for a short period of

TOO SIMPLE?

- The great thing is you do not need to understand the theory to make it work. Use the power of the essential process of mediation in a planned context to move us from conflict to cooperation.

Basic Methods for Resolving Conflict

- Power or Compete (Fight)
- Collaboration (face)
- Compromise or negotiation
- Denial or Avoidance (Flight)
- Accommodating, Smoothing Over (Freeze)